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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/566,680	02/01/2006	Dag Berg	1034281-000004	9215
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EXAMINER				
VANOT, TIMOTHY C				
ART UNIT		PAPER NUMBER		
1793				
NOTIFICATION DATE		DELIVERY MODE		
04/24/2008		ELECTRONIC		

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Notice of the Office communication was sent electronically on above-indicated "Notification Date" to the following e-mail address(es):

ADIPFDD@bipc.com

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/566,680

Applicant(s)

BERG ET AL.

Examiner

TIMOTHY C. VAN DYKE

Art Unit

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-7 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-7 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☒ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 01 February 2006 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
 - ☒ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SF/ICE)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date Feb. 1, 2006
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date ____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: ____

DETAILED ACTION

Priority

Receipt is acknowledged of papers submitted under 35 U.S.C. 119(a)-(d), which papers have been placed of record in the file.

Specification

a) The brief description of the drawing set forth in the specification should be titled with the section header: "Brief Description of the Drawing".

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claims 1 and 5 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

- a) In claim 1, it is not clear what is intended by the phrase: "corresponding to a maximum of one time the amount of mercury dissolved in the acid solution".
- b) In claim 5, it is not clear what a "chloride environment mercury" is.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

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(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148

USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining

obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

The person having ordinary skill in the art has the capability of understanding the scientific and engineering principles applicable to the claimed invention. The references of record in this application reasonably reflect this level of skill.

Claims 1-7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over GB 1 409 456 (hence "GB-456"), provided in the Applicants' IDS filed on Feb. 1, 2006.

Pg. 2 lns. 13-17 in GB-456 describes a process for removing mercury from sulfuric acid by adding a thiosulfate to the sulfuric acid and precipitating salts from the

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acid. Example 1 describes the use of sodium thiosulfate. Claim 2 in GB-456 discloses that the thiosulfate is added to the acid in amount of from 0.04 to 10 kg/m³ acid. Claim 5 in GB-456 discloses that the sulfuric acid has a concentration of "up to" 95% by weight.

The difference between the Applicants' claims and GB-456 is that Applicants' claim 1 sets forth that the sulfuric acid has a concentration of 35 to 45 weight percent and a mercury content of at least 1 g/Liter (whereas claim 5 in GB-456 discloses that the sulfuric acid has a concentration of "up to" 95 weight percent and pg. 2 Ins. 54-60 sets forth that the quantity of mercury (in the sulfuric acid) may be "up to" 20 grams/t (i. e. 20 grams/ton?), *however* it is submitted that this difference would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made *because* the courts have already determined that the overlapping portion of a claimed range and a prior art reference's range is *prima facie* obvious: please note the discussion of the *In re Wertheim* 541 F.2d 257, 191 USPQ 90 (CCPA 1976) court decision set forth in section 2144.05(I) in the MPEP.

The following references are made of record:

U. S. Pat. 5,324,499 disclosing the addition of sodium thiosulfate to sulfuric acid to remove arsenic (please see col. 5 Ins. 1-8);

U. S. Pat. 4,526,768 disclosing the addition of sodium thiosulfate to sulfuric acid to precipitate out mercury (please see col. 2 Ins. 13-17);

U. S. Pat. 4,354,942 disclosing the use of alkali metal thiosulfates to stabilize mercury in mercury-containing materials (please see the abstract); and

U. S. Pat. 3,873,581 disclosing a process for removing mercury from aqueous solutions of anthraquinone sulfonic acids and their process effluents by treating the aqueous solution or effluent with alkali metal thiosulfate (please see claim 1).

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to TIMOTHY C. VANOY whose telephone number is (571)272-8158. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon-Fri 8-4:30.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Stanley Silverman, can be reached on 571-272-1358. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

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Timothy C Vanoy
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 1793

tcv

/Timothy C Vanoy/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 1793